

IN THE CLAIMS:

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for managing electronic data over a telecommunications medium indicative of information pertaining to the transport of a product between a point of origin and a point of destination comprising the steps of:

creating a plurality of data files in a database for storing respective consumer-related and product-related information;

storing ~~providing a database containing data indicative of~~ consumer-related and product-related information associated with the product, ~~the~~ in a respective data file, the database being accessible by a computer server system at a service center;

creating an inventory record containing data indicative of a condition status of the product;

storing the inventory record in a respective one of the plurality of data files;

initializing a processing module stored on a portable computing device having a display screen by inputting into a ~~the~~ portable computing device electronic data indicative of a unique customer number associated with the transport of the product between the point of origin and the point of destination, the portable computing device being capable of scanning barcodes wherein the processing module is programmed to generate a series of questions with respect to the transport of the product and display the questions on the display screen;

in response to at least one of the series of questions, inputting into the portable computing device electronic data indicative of a reason code if the product is being returned from the point of destination;

transmitting over the telecommunications medium to the computer server system ~~at least a portion of the electronic data input into the portable computing device~~ in response to the at least one of the series of questions; and

updating the inventory record stored in the database with the transmitted electronic data if a condition status of the product has changed.

Claim 2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
in response to at least one of the series of questions, inputting into the portable computing device electronic data indicative of a product type code associated with the product; and

in response to at least one of the series of questions, inputting into the portable computing device electronic data indicative of at least one code indicative of damage information associated with the product if the product is damaged.

Claim 3. (Original) The method of claim 2, the step of inputting data indicative of at least one code indicative of damage information comprising the step of inputting into the portable computing device electronic data indicative of at least one of:
a code indicative of damage type; and
a code indicative of surface type; and
a code indicative of damage location types.

Claim 4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

creating the unique customer number in response to a consumer purchasing at least one product;

associating the unique customer number with a respective one of the plurality of data files containing data indicative of consumer-related and product-related information associated with the purchase of the at least one product;

determining whether a delivery of the at least one product to the point of destination is a split delivery; and

in response to a question generated by a processing module stored on the portable computing device and displayed on the display screen, inputting into the portable computing device electronic data indicative of whether the delivery is a split delivery; and

scheduling a second delivery if the delivery is a split delivery.

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

establishing a set of conditions for an authorized return;
crediting a customer for a return of the product if the set of conditions is met; and
notifying a financial services group that a customer has been credited for the return of a product.

Claim 6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

in response to at least one of the series of questions, inputting into the portable computing device data indicative of a service code, the service code indicative of whether a scope of services to be performed in association with the delivery of the product to a point of destination is the same as originally requested by a consumer or modified by the consumer at the time of delivery.

Claim 7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 further comprising the step of:

in response to at least one of the series of questions, inputting into the portable computing device data indicative of a quantity associated with the service code;
in response to at least one of the series of questions, inputting into the portable computing device data indicative of a change in cost associated with the service code;
and
notifying a financial services group of the change in cost.

Claim 8. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
generating a delivery barcode label to be affixed to at least one of the product and a container for the product, the delivery barcode label including at least one barcode expressing data indicative of the unique customer number, a model number for the product and a serial number for the product.

Claim 9. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
inputting into the computer server system a customer request for a return of the product; and
generating at least one return barcode label to be affixed to at least one of the product and a container for the product, the return barcode label including at least one barcode expressing data indicative of a return authorization number, a first model number for the product and a first serial number for the product.

Claim 10. (Original) The method of claim 9 further comprising the steps of:
inputting into the portable computing device data indicative of the return authorization number;
inputting into the portable computing device data indicative of the first model number;
comparing the first model number to a second model number affixed to the product; and
determining whether a return of the product should be made if the first model number does not match the second model number.

Claim 11. (Original) The method of claim 10 further comprising the steps of:
inputting into the portable computing device data indicative of the first serial number;
comparing the first serial number to a second serial number affixed to the product; and
picking up the product being returned if the first serial number does not match the second serial number.

Claim 12. (Original) The method of claim 9 further comprising the steps of:
inputting into the portable computing device data indicative of a customer's signature and data indicative of the customer's last name displayed as text.

Claim 13. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising the steps of:
inputting into the computer server system a customer request for a return of the product; and

generating a return barcode label to be affixed to at least one of the product and a container for the product, the return barcode label including at least one barcode expressing data indicative of a return authorization number, a first model number for the product and a first serial number for the product.

Claim 14. (Currently Amended) A method for managing electronic data over a telecommunications medium, the data indicative of customer-related and product-related information pertaining to the delivery and return of a product between a service center and a customer's site, the method comprising the steps of:

storing electronic data indicative of consumer-related and product-related information in a database of a computer server system;

associating a unique customer number with the product;

inputting the unique customer number into a portable computing device capable of reading barcodes, the portable computing device comprising a display screen and a processing module programmed to generate and display within the display screen a series of questions with respect to the delivery and return of the product whereby inputting the unique customer number initializes the processing module;

in response to a question generated by the processing module and displayed in the display screen, inputting a reason code into the portable computing device if the customer refuses delivery of the product;

in response to a question generated by the processing module and displayed in the display screen, inputting a reason code into the portable computing device if the customer has requested a return of a product;

uploading data from the portable computing device over the telecommunications network to the database of the computer server system; and

updating the database of the computer server system with the uploaded data.

Claim 15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 further comprising the steps of:

in response to a question generated by the processing module and displayed in the display screen, inputting a product type code into the portable computing device if the product is being returned; and

in response to a question generated by the processing module and displayed in the display screen, inputting at least one code into the portable computing device indicative of damage information associated with the product if the product is being returned due to damage.

Claim 16. (Original) The method of claim 15, the step of inputting at least one code indicative of damage comprising the step of inputting at least one of:

- a code indicative of damage type; and
- a code indicative of surface type; and
- a code indicative of damage location types.

Claim 17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 further comprising the steps of:

in response to a question generated by the processing module and displayed in the display screen, inputting into the portable computing device data indicative of a service code if the customer requests a change of service; and

in response to a question generated by the processing module and displayed in the display screen, inputting into the portable computing device data indicative of a change of cost associated with the change of service.

Claim 18. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising the steps of:
crediting a customer for a return of the product; and
notifying a financial services group that a customer has been credited for the return of a product.

Claim 19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 further comprising the steps of:

in response to a question generated by the processing module and displayed in the display screen, inputting into the portable computing device a return authorization number associated with the return of the product if the customer has requested the return of the product;

in response to a question generated by the processing module and displayed in the display screen, generating at least one return barcode label with the portable computing device if the customer has requested the return of the product, the return barcode label including at least one barcode expressing data indicative of the unique customer number, a first model number for the product and a first serial number for the product;

affixing the return barcode label to at least one of the product and a container for the product; and

covering a delivery barcode label with the return barcode label if the delivery barcode label is affixed to at least one of the product and the container for the product.

Claim 20. (Currently Amended) A computerized system for efficiently managing the transport of a product between a point of origin and a point of destination comprising:

a centralized computer server system ~~capable of comprising a centralized~~ processing module programmed for transmitting and receiving data over a telecommunications medium;

a database accessible by the centralized computer server system containing at least one of consumer-related information and product-related information associated with the transport of the product;

a processor operable to update the database with data received over the telecommunications medium;

a remote computer system situated remote from the centralized computer server system, the remote computer system ~~capable of comprising a remote processing~~

module programmed for exchanging data with the centralized computer server system over the telecommunications medium; and

a portable computing device capable of collecting and storing electronic data by scanning barcodes, the portable computing device capable of downloading electronic data to the computer system and comprising a display screen and a first processing module programmed to generate a series of questions with respect to the transport of the product between the point of origin and the point of destination and display them on the display screen.

Claim 21. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 20, ~~further comprising at least one of:~~

~~—— the remote processing module programmed to generate a delivery barcode label affixed to at least one of the product and a container for the product, the delivery barcode label including at least one barcode expressing data indicative of the a unique customer number~~ associated with the product, a model number for the product and a serial number for the product; and

~~a return barcode label affixed to at least one of the product and a container for the product, the return barcode label including at least one barcode expressing data indicative of a return authorization number~~ generated in response to a customer requesting a return of the product, a model number for the product and a serial number for the product.

Claim 22. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 20, ~~further comprising:~~
~~—— the first processing module further programmed to receive a first set of electronic data in response to a first one of the series of questions, the first set of electronic data indicative of a reason code input into the portable computing device selected from a set of reason codes expressed as a first set of barcodes and adapted to be transported with a person transporting the product between the point of origin and the point of destination, the first set barcodes comprising a plurality of barcodes expressing data indicative of a plurality of reasons why a customer may refuse to accept a delivered product and why a customer may return a product.~~

Claim 23. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 20, ~~further comprising:~~
~~——the first processing module further programmed to receive a second set of~~
~~electronic data in response to a second one of the series of questions, the second set of~~
~~electronic data indicative of a product type code input into the portable computing~~
~~device selected from a set of product type codes expressed as a second set of~~
~~barcodes and adapted to be transported with a person transporting the product between~~
~~the point of origin and the point of destination, the second set of barcodes comprising a~~
plurality of barcodes expressing data indicative of a plurality of product types.

Claim 24. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 20, ~~further comprising:~~
~~——the first processing module further programmed to receive a third set of~~
~~electronic data in response to a third one of the series of questions, the third set of~~
~~electronic data indicative of a damage type code input into the portable computing~~
~~device selected from a set of damage type codes expressed as a third set of barcodes~~
~~and adapted to be transported with a person transporting the product between the point~~
~~of origin and the point of destination, the third set of barcodes comprising a plurality of~~
barcodes expressing data indicative of a plurality of damage types associated with the
product.

Claim 25. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 24, ~~further comprising:~~
~~——the first processing module further programmed to receive a fourth set of~~
~~electronic data in response to a fourth one of the series of questions, the fourth set of~~
~~electronic data indicative of a damage location code input into the portable computing~~
~~device selected from a set of damage location codes expressed as a fourth set of~~
~~barcodes and adapted to be transported with a person transporting the product between~~
~~the point of origin and the point of destination, the fourth set of barcodes comprising a~~
plurality of barcodes expressing data indicative of a plurality of damage locations
associated with the product.

Claim 26. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 25, ~~further comprising:~~
~~the first processing module further programmed to receive a fifth set of electronic~~
~~data in response to a fifth one of the series of questions, the fifth set of electronic data~~
~~indicative of a damage surface code input into the portable computing device selected~~
~~from a set of damage surface codes expressed as a fifth set of barcodes and adapted to~~
~~be transported with a person transporting the product between the point of origin and~~
~~the point of destination, the fifth set of barcodes comprising a plurality of barcodes~~
expressing data indicative of a plurality of damage surfaces associated with the product.

Claim 27. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 20, ~~further comprising:~~
~~the first processing module further programmed to receive a sixth set of~~
~~electronic data in response to a sixth one of the series of questions, the sixth set of~~
~~electronic data indicative of a service code input into the portable computing device~~
~~selected from a set of service codes expressed as a sixth set of barcodes and adapted~~
~~to be transported with a person transporting the product between the point of origin and~~
~~the point of destination, the sixth set of barcodes comprising a plurality of barcodes~~
expressing data indicative of a plurality of services that may be performed at the point of
destination.